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## A RUNAWAY METEOR.

WILLIAM EPLER.

In the Journal we have read an account of the deep snow, which fell in the winter of 1830 and 1831, and the sudden change, which occurred December 20, 1836.

The writer read a newspaper account of the "Shooting Stars," which occurred November 13, 1833; besides, he has heard the story often told by old pioneers, which to them was a strange mystery.

In the late fall or early winter of 1876 or '77—I wish I could be more definite as to the date—about 8 o'clock in the evening a meteor of unusual proportions passed over Virginia, Cass County, Illinois.

The writer was reading in his home, the window shades were drawn. He observed a flash of light pass the window. He paid but little or no attention to it, thinking it was a neighbor passing on the street with his lantern. A few moments later a loud explosive noise was heard, so much so as to jar the windows. Realizing at once what it might be, he hurried out, only to find everything tranquil and in repose, except for a sound which grew fainter and fainter until it ceased in the far distant west. The course of the sound was sufficiently plain to distinctly indicate the direction from whence the meteor came. Its course was from a few degrees south of west to a few degrees north of east.

John H. Wood, an intelligent, educated gentleman, cashier of the Centennial National Bank, was going from his home down to the business part of town. When at the street corner where the First Presbyterian Church now is he observed a brilliant flash of light in the heavens and a number of flaming meteors, seemingly coming from a common center, instantly disappearing eastward.

Resuming his steps toward town, when crossing the bridge at the village brook on South Main Street, he heard

a loud report, evidently proceeding from the meteor, at the moment it separated into fragments.

The following morning, going to his business, he stopped at the street corner where he witnessed the great light the previous evening. He timed himself by his watch, walking at the same pace of the evening before. He thus observed the exact time it required to reach the brook. Being expert with the pencil and having a philosopher's ken, he readily computed its distance from the earth, which was twenty-four miles.

The meteor disintegrated, thus causing the loud report, at a point 15 or 20 degrees north of the zenith of Virginia.

The question intrudes itself: From whence came this meteor, where had it been during the ages, what caused it to swerve from its orbit, plunge into the earth's atmosphere to its destruction?

I make this contribution to the Journal in the interest of science, and in kindly remembrance of my long since deceased friend, John H. Wood.